UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/51/73
12 February 1997

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 105

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/51/614)]

51/73. Assistance to unaccompanied refugee minors

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 49/172 of 23 December 1994 and 50/150 of 21 December 1995,

Aware of the fact that the majority of refugees are children and women,

Bearing in mind that unaccompanied refugee minors are among the most vulnerable and at risk of neglect, violence, forced military recruitment, sexual assault and other abuses and therefore require special assistance and care,

Mindful of the fact that the ultimate solution to the plight of unaccompanied minors is their return to and reunification with their families,

Noting the revised Guidelines on Refugee Children issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in May 1994 and the development of an emergency kit to facilitate coordination and to enhance the quality of responses to the needs of unaccompanied minors by the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Children's Fund and non-governmental organizations,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner in the identification and tracing of unaccompanied refugee minors, and welcoming its effort in reunifying family members of refugees,

Welcoming the efforts exerted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the reunification of family members of refugees,

Noting the efforts of the High Commissioner to ensure the protection of and assistance to refugees, including children and unaccompanied minors, and that further efforts need to be exerted to this effect,

Recalling the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child[1] and the 1951 Convention[2] and the 1967 Protocol[3] relating to the Status of Refugees,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;[4]

2. Expresses its deep concern at the continued plight of unaccompanied refugee minors, and emphasizes once again the urgent need for their early identification and for timely, detailed and accurate information on their number and whereabouts;

3. Expresses the hope that adequate resources will be provided for programmes of identification and tracing of unaccompanied refugee minors;

4. Calls upon the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, to incorporate policies that aim at preventing refugee family separation into its programmes, conscious of the importance of family unity;

5. Calls upon all Governments, the Secretary-General, the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to exert the maximum effort to assist and protect refugee minors and to expedite the return to and reunification with their families of unaccompanied refugee minors;

6. Urges the Office of the High Commissioner, all United Nations organizations, other international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned to take appropriate steps to mobilize resources commensurate to the needs and interests of the unaccompanied refugee minors and for their reunification with their families;

7. Condemns all acts of exploitation of unaccompanied refugee minors, including their use as soldiers or human shields in armed conflict and their forced recruitment into military forces, and any other acts that endanger their safety and personal security;

8. Calls upon the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund and other United Nations organizations and international organizations to mobilize adequate assistance to unaccompanied minors in the areas of relief, education, health and psychological rehabilitation;

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[1] Resolution 44/25, annex.

[2] United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[3] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[4] A/51/329.

9. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

82nd plenary meeting
12 December 1996